

**OHNR: OH-1999-27****DOI: 30-03-1999****TRSID:** **DTR: 02-06-1999****QCSID:****Text Review:****INAME: KENNY, Minnie****Text w/Tape:****IPLACE: S54 Conference Room****VIEWER: DICKERSON, Y/WILLIAMS, J****[Tape 1, Side 1]**

**Williams:** Today is 30 March. We are in the S54 Conference room talking to Mrs. Minnie Kenny about her experiences at NSA when she came in the early 1950's for the Black History Project. The interviewers are Yolonde Dickerson and myself, Jeannette Williams. Minnie, When did you come to the Agency?

**Kenny:** In May of 1952.

**Williams:** OK. And how did you come... I'm going to take off my coat. Would you like to take off your coat?

**Kenny:** More than likely I will. To keep it from getting too wrinkled up.

**Williams:** How did you come to be at NSA and tell us a little bit about your background.

**Kenny:** Actually it was very interesting. I was working at Commerce. I was working at the, actually, the Census Bureau and I had come down, they had transferred us down from Philadelphia when they closed the (B% DICINIO) office up there. So I came down here in '51 and I worked at Census and I was helping them to close out the whole (B% DICINIO) operation.

**Williams:** What were you doing? I mean what were you (XB by next speaker).

**Kenny:** I was working in the office of... What did we call our? What were we?... I was like a... I want to say "Auditor" but...

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** In that kind of thing.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Where I started in Census really as a Coder and then I moved up to a Checker and then the next thing I knew I was in the auditing branch where... Which was similar to an M3 operation. And that's where I worked and I was actually in charge of programming the (B% DiCINIO) operation out of business.

**Williams:** OK.

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**Kenny:** And when I looked and saw our office was going to be, when it was going to be out of business and I decided I'd better start making plans because I still had to work.

**Williams:** You moved... You were at the Census Bureau in Philadelphia?

**Kenny:** No. We had transferred down here to Commerce.

**Williams:** You had transferred?

**Kenny:** Yes.

**Williams:** OK. Did you work at Philadelphia at one time.

**Kenny:** Yes. Yes I did that's where I started in government, no, full time in government because before that I worked part-time after school for the government in various places; the Post Office and the Army Map Service.

**Williams:** Were'd you grow up, Minnie?

**Kenny:** Philadelphia.

**Williams:** Oh, OK.

**Kenny:** I grew up in Philadelphia and one of the things we did in... Our high school was different. I went to an all girls school, Philadelphia High School for Girls, and we had to take the Clerical Exam in the 10th grade to pass English. That was one of our proofs of passage as we would go down and take this Civil Service Clerical Exam and it let, you know, it was a kind of "bench mark".

**Williams:** But all girls should type and take short-hand or something like that?

**Kenny:** No.

**Williams:** Oh, OK.

**Kenny:** It was tests of English.

**Williams:** Oh, OK.

**Kenny:** 'Cause ours was an academic school.

**Williams:** I see, OK.

**Kenny:** And we did that and that's how I got into the Post Office, because I could pass their exam. And then during the war, they needed people with our background to help develop maps and whatever so I went to the Map Service and worked after school there too.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** And then when I graduated and I needed a job, I was working actually in private industry, Lou Foster Sportswear, I was a trimmer. I'll never forget it as long as I live. And I got an opportunity, when they came with the Census, I applied and I was accepted and I went in there and took the test and all that and did the coding. I did not go out on the street but I took the results of what the investigators did, you know, and we coded them in for processing.

**Williams:** But you didn't actually do any Key Punch or anything like that?

**Kenny:** No. We just went over the sheets and coded the information.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Eventually, they closed that office. We came down here and we were assigned to Commerce and at that time... First, at Commerce, I was a, would you believe it or not, Microprocessor, microfilm, we'd film-in sheets and met some of the people who came here doing that and they moved me into this other job and I enjoyed it. I really liked that kind of analytical work that we were doing and the processing and the moving of things around and if we closed this office, what happens here? And all that kind of stuff, you know, that kind of thing. So eventually, anyhow, I found that we were going to be processed out of business and we had just sent, we had sending people over to AFSA, which was what NSA was, Armed Forces Security Agency. So interview and hire. So when I looked and saw what date I had programmed us out of business, I talked to Jim Bostick. I told Jim "I'm going over there." Jim Bostick went over there and we both came off and got hired.

**Williams:** Now you know we were to interview Jim Bostick but Jim didn't feel well enough to talk to us.

**Dickerson:** Yeah Jim's not well.

**Kenny:** Oh I didn't know that!

**Williams:** Uh-huh. It's interesting. In fact, we were to interview him this week and he called us and said he couldn't do it. But there's a connection there.

**Kenny:** Yeah.

**Williams:** Interesting.

**Kenny:** Yeah, now that's... Jim and I got to be very good friends. In fact, to tell you the truth, when we were... We were Microprocessors together and we used to race to see who could do the most and be the most accurate.

**Williams:** Isn't that interesting.

**Kenny:** I can tell you that. It's been that long ago but we did.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Anyhow, when I came... I was called and I came to be interviewed at Arlington Hall and there was a woman, I don't know her name, but she graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls too.

**Williams:** Oh really.

**Kenny:** And it was a white lady. And I was wearing my class ring and she said, "You graduated from Girl's High?". I said, "Yes." She says, "Well, that does it for you!" She says, "You're going to be hired and you're not going down in "The Hole"."

**Williams:** "The hole" meaning?

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**Kenny:** I didn't have the slightest idea what she was talking about. I was just glad I had a job, Dear.

**Williams:** "Not Going down in The Hole."

**Kenny:** That's right. And I went over to... At that time we had to go over to Naval Security Station for, I guess it was Naval Security Station, but it was somewhere we had to go for Uh...

**Williams:** Polygraph?

**Kenny:** Processing.

**Williams:** Processing.

**Kenny:** And I did that and I came back and she assigned me upstairs. And there was a group of us. We were in the first group that had their initial assignment upstairs. It was Barbara Barnes, Minnie Kenny. Who else was in there?

**Williams:** When you say assigned upstairs, you were in... ?

**Kenny:** We were not... Most of the blacks at that time were being assigned down in the basement.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** We were the first group who's initial assignment was upstairs in Operations.

**Williams:** And that was "B" Building?

**Kenny:** Yes.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Yes, we were all assigned in the same wing.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** It's interesting, at least I should say most of us were in the same wing. F236, something like that. It was either 236 or 238, I've forgotten, was the section that I went into.

**Williams:** Do you remember any of the others that came in with you?

**Kenny:** Barbara Barnes, I'm trying to think of their names now, [redacted]. What's [redacted] last name? I know where [redacted] lives but I can't think of [redacted] last name.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** [redacted] I can get you their last names.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I'll do that.

**Williams:** OK.

**Dickerson:** Those are names we haven't heard before.

**Williams:** No, we haven't.

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**Kenny:** Because they live just over the District line in Prince George's County.

**Williams:** Was [redacted] in that group?

**Kenny:** Not in our group.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** We went to... We were assigned to "U" Street School and it's interesting, I met [redacted] here. [redacted] at NSA. [redacted] Russian.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** And we stayed there until we got our clearances, or whatever. We came as a group.

**Williams:** To this organization?

**Kenny:** To the organization. In fact, we were all working under; in our group, we all worked under Sam Hall, who, I guess at the time he must have been a Division Chief, Office Chief; I don't know what, but he was the one, the head of the wing.

**Williams:** Was Jeff Gurin in this... you didn't work Plain Text?

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**Kenny:** Uh-uh.

**Williams:** OK. Can you tell me what target you were working?

**Kenny:** Yes. We worked what they call (B%ALOE), that's what we call it now but it was [redacted] we had some [redacted] All those...

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**Williams:** Southeast Asian.

**Kenny:** Southeast Asian type things.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** [redacted] was in the back [redacted] was in the back of the wing and [redacted] came in later, about a year or two later, [redacted] and what's [redacted] name? I can see [redacted] face because we got promoted in tandem all the time.

**Williams:** What grade were you hired as?

**Kenny:** I was hired as a 4. I was a 5 at Commerce but I had to take a grade reduction.

**Williams:** Why?

**Kenny:** Because I needed a job and that's what they offered me.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I don't know why but I was a 5 and, you know, 5 was beginning professional at that time.

**Williams:** Oh yeah. That was a big deal.

**Kenny:** But I was dropped back to a 4 but no loss in salary.

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**Williams:** Great. OK.

**Kenny:** I think the person, the woman who interviewed me, God bless her soul, I don't remember her name, I don't know what happened to her, but I have blessed her many a day.

**Williams:** She was in personnel?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. At Headquarters Building. I have blessed her many a day because she could have done anything. She could have placed us anywhere.

**Williams:** Absolutely.

**Kenny:** And just from a class ring... I keep my class ring too because I think that was a lucky token.

**Williams:** Did you have... Had you studied languages in high school?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I didn't study... I studied romance languages in high school and German in college but that's not where I... I mean, everybody thinks of me with language but my, in my, the first half of my career, I was a Cryptanalyst.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And that's where my heart was. I really loved Cryptanalysis. I only got into the language because I wanted to find out what people were saying.

**Williams:** OK. Manual Crypto?

**Kenny:** Manual. That's all we had then. We didn't have machine.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** We had Manual Crypt, we had Code Breaking, we had PADS and we had Slip Sticks. All kinds of funny, intriguing systems.

**Williams:** And that was what you did in your first assignment?

**Kenny:** My first assignment, I was sat down with a... We used to have those great big metal cabinets full of traffic and I was told to make some sense out of it. And it was very interesting because in doing that I found out how to do CA. And Mr. Hall rewarded me. I got promoted.

**Williams:** To a 5?

**Kenny:** I got promoted to a 5 and then to a 7 and we had a little controversy before I got my 9. We had a little controversy because someone else got... [redacted] We were all friends. We all worked together but [redacted] got a promotion and when they read it... 'Cause at that time when you got promoted they would congregate the section and they would read the justification, you know, and everybody would clap and all that, right there in the section. And when they read it, [redacted] was getting promoted for something I did and I raised Holy Hell. I was very volatile when I was much younger. I've learned to temper my temper.

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**Williams:** Why does that not surprise me?

**Kenny:** But I was. I mean, you don't know. We had... It was a little different. I don't paint a rosy picture of those early days because it wasn't rosy. I was very volatile. Let me put it this way; I had a quick temper and I kept to myself because I saw what the situation was. We were not necessarily welcomed. I had a, I guess, I had a fight, I might as well put it like it was, early on in my job and I walked off and didn't think I was going to be allowed to come back. And it was all over coffee cups. At the time, I didn't drink coffee. And they used to have wooden trays about so long with handles on either end and you would collect all the cups and the people who drank coffee would take turns. And this woman came up to my desk one day, it was a table. I didn't have a desk. I had a table. I shared a table. And she put the thing down on top of the paper, I was working, and she said, "You will get coffee. It's your turn to get coffee." I said, "No, I don't drink coffee so I don't get coffee." And she told me I did and that I would and I said, "No, I'm not going to get coffee." And I took it and moved it and she put it back down and then she looked at me and she said, "You will get coffee toots!" I'll never forget this because toots is the word that triggered it because I told her, "I will not get coffee toots!" And she said, "Don't you dare call me toots!" And that's when I stood up and I collared her and before I knew it I had the lady down on the floor. I did. I had her down on the floor and we were fighting and they had to separate us and I went home.

**Williams:** Minnie, this was about '51, '52?

**Kenny:** It was '52. Right after I... It was during my first year on the job. The first... It was in '52. And I figured they were going to, that it was going to be a firing.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** And I went home. I talked to my father. My father said, "You're going back and we're going back with you." And so, we had a meeting.

**Williams:** Your father came? Into Arlington Hall Station?

**Kenny:** Because... Not only my father but we had a... My father was a Ward Leader and we had Congress people here and so he'd alerted all these people that somebody was misusing his child. And so we just cleaned it up. It was cleaned up. And people got, started to treat me like I was a little strange because I wasn't, you're not supposed to speak back, you know. You were supposed to do whatever they said but they learned real quick I didn't do that.

**Williams:** So did all the blacks work in one area or?

**Kenny:** No. We were scattered. We were disbursed throughout the place. Barbara Barnes and I worked in one section. [redacted] and... I can't think of the man's name, he was short and plump. anyhow, they worked in another section and then when [redacted] last name?

[redacted] and [redacted] they worked in another section but we were not clustered together. We were just spread throughout.

**Williams:** Uh-huh. But you got the sense that you weren't necessarily welcomed in there from the white co-workers?

**Kenny:** Right. When we first got there, we were definitely not particularly welcomed upstairs, right. We were just not. It's interesting because the people at the Snack Bar, which was outside, were black and they were so glad to see somebody, you know. And it got to, you know, interestingly enough, one of the, and I can't think of his name, eventually came onboard as an employee in (B% L), you know, but...

**Williams:** Did you have much contact with the people in "B Group"? Not "B Group". You were in "B" building, in "A" building?

**Kenny:** Occasionally.

**Williams:** Occasionally?

**Kenny:** Well, lunch time and whatever, we would interact with people and even with the people downstairs. We didn't... We were not necessarily involved in their social action, because they had parties down there and things like that, that we were never, at least I was never invited to.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** They were more like a little closed community as far as we were concerned and I don't know whether... It's not that... See, I'll tell you. Washington was funny at that time to me, 'cause I came here brand new from Philadelphia. I got my own set of customs and worries. And the thing I noticed about NSA, not only among the blacks but among the whites also, people didn't say "Good Morning". You know, where I came from (if you didn't sleep with a person you come in and you see them you say "Good Mourning" and you keep on, you know, whatever. It's just a courtesy.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** But I can remember the first day I walked in on the job and said "Good Morning", I mean, people looked at me like I was crazy. You just, you know, and then too, Washington had it's own set of, at least the black society in Washington was segregated also.

**Williams:** Yes it was.

**Kenny:** So you have to remember that too and I did not fit. I didn't fit because first of all I wasn't the right color and secondly, they would go places and see me there and couldn't figure out what was happening.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And I don't know, it's just a different society that's all.

**Williams:** I don't think it's changed a great deal.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.



**Williams:** I really don't.

**Kenny:** No. It just seemed, at least on the black side, it was more who you knew and what you had to offer. If you had something that someone from the "Tans" wanted, you were accepted by them and if you had something that the "Lights" wanted, you were accepted by them but if you didn't, you know, you "Blackie Step Back". Let's face it. And that prevailed in the Agency as well. I can tell you that.

**Williams:** Did you have a sense, and this is getting into a really sensitive issue but... And we haven't talked about this with any other interviewee but did you have the sense that within NSA, if you were lighter you went farther faster or it was a little bit easier for you?

**Kenny:** I never had that feeling.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I never did. It may be true but I didn't have that feeling. And I'll tell you why because usually, at least I know among the people that I knew, I got promoted just as fast as anybody and sometimes faster than most.

**Williams:** But you perhaps were an exception. I mean, you had an exceptional career Minnie, but I'm talking, in general, would you have that observation?

**Kenny:** No.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I didn't have that observation. What I found though, and I want to tell you this; I think that sometimes you find some people who, I guess, maybe felt that way but I've found, at least from my observation, in a lot of instances some of the darker people made it because they were accepted better. Some of the whites were more comfortable with them.

**Williams:** Is that right?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** Huh. OK. Well, where are we in your career? You're at... In '52 you're a Cryptanalyst. That was your title?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. No. My title was communications clerk.

**Williams:** Oh, OK. All right. And...

**Kenny:** I didn't get to be a Cryppie until, I don't know, I guess when I got to be a 9.

**Williams:** How did you get to Arlington Hall Station? Did you... Were you in a car pool or did you take the bus?

**Kenny:** I used to take the bus all the time and then I joined a car pool with Nimrod. Actually, it was very interesting because I was sitting, standing on the corner at Benning Road and I guess it's... What is that other street that Benning Road crosses where Sears used to be? Anyhow, on Benning Road, waiting for the bus and a car pulled up and it was full of people and

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in it was... Well, Nimrod was driving, Jim Clark was in there, everybody, you know. And he said, "You need a ride?" And I looked at them and I said, "I don't know these people."

**Williams:** You didn't recognize them from out here?

**Kenny:** No, I hadn't seen them.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** And he said, "Don't you work at NSA?" Well, don't you work at AFSA? At Arlington Hall is what it was and I said, "Yeah". Said, "Well, we're going to Arlington Hall. You need a ride?" "Yes." And that's how I got to know Nimrod and Jim Clark and [REDACTED] and whoever else was in the car.

**Williams:** Uh-huh. OK. Now, your family was in Washington? Your father was here? Oh, he came from Philadelphia to support his daughter?

**Kenny:** Yes, yes.

**Williams:** Oh my God!

**Kenny:** Yes.

**Williams:** Oh. Good for him.

**Kenny:** Yes. No, I have no family here.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** My father had a friend here, Mr. Oxley, Lawrence Oxley, who was a member of Roosevelt's Black cabinet. They came up from North Carolina together way back when so they, you know, and they continued their friendship over the years. So when I came down, I got to know Mr. Oxley.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And that's how people couldn't place me because Mr. Oxley had... he was, you know, up there socially and he would have these functions and they were mostly like Strawberry and Cream things, you know, and Garden Party type things, you know, and people would show up and there I would be and "How does she fit in with this?" And I didn't come in the garden door, I came in the front door.

**Williams:** Good for you.

**Kenny:** It's very interesting, you know, when you stop and think about not only what we had to deal with from our own but also what we had to deal with from the others. You know. 'Cause you stop and think, there were lots of people at the Agency at that time, I know 'cause I met them in the cafeteria and I knew some of them, I'd heard about some of the things they were doing, who had even advanced degrees and who were working at very low grades. Yet other people at the Agency who did not have their same kind of background or abilities were being placed in positions over them and at higher grades. And that's the part that used to irritate me.

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**Williams:** Did you know, since you did have some connection to Washington society, did you know Jeff Tansil?

**Kenny:** I know the name but I can't remember him.

**Williams:** OK. He was in AFSA 213, that all black group.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** But we also found that the Tansil name is a very prominent name in black Washington society and we were wondering if there was a connection. That's all.

**Kenny:** I don't know. I can tell you this much, there were quite a few people in Washington society who worked at the Agency when I was there.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Some of them left. I can remember some of the people who helped put NSA on the map with computers.

**Williams:** Syphax?

**Kenny:** Syphax? You mean Fred? Yeah, but even before Fred... Fred was, well he's a prominent family, you know.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** But... Oh. I've lost his name. It'll come back to me. Taylor, John Taylor. I don't know if John is still alive or what. John had a propensity of getting into trouble but John was a brain and he was one of the first blacks that made "Who's who in computers" at the time when we didn't even have a computer science major in any college and...

**Williams:** And he worked here?

**Kenny:** He worked here. In fact, nearly, if you look at those early "Who's who in computer" lists you will find most of the are from NSA.

**Williams:** Is that right?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Some of our, now... Some of the computer companies were started by former NSA people. People who left and went out.

**Williams:** Minnie, can you give any concrete examples of people who were very bright, had credentials, had the paper trail, people of color but were working for others who weren't as, who didn't have the qualification?

**Kenny:** I'll have to think about that. Let me think about that.

**Williams:** OK. Were there any whites that you would sight as having been particularly helpful other than the lady who said "You're not going in the hole" that stands out in your mind as having been very helpful to you in your early career?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. Sam Hall for one.

**Williams:** Sam Hall.

**Kenny:** He died recently. Sam Hall was helpful not only to me but, I think, to lots of people because... The one thing that I remember about him always is that; we had only met him once, and that was the day we came in and he had all these people that were coming in to his organization and he went around the room and asked us our name. Barbara and I were down shopping about maybe a month or two later, downtown Washington, coming out of (B% Garfinckel's) and who passes by but Mr. Hall and he calls us by our name.

**Williams:** That had to impress you.

**Kenny:** That left an impression.

**Williams:** I'm sure it did.

**Kenny:** But the reason why I say Sam Hall for one was because he was the one that started me into language at NSA. He gave me the opportunity. It wasn't easy because I had to go to school at night and it was down at Connecticut Avenue and whatever, and I lived out Northeast and the classes ran until twelve o'clock at night and I did not have rides but I did it. But he asked... You know, back in those days it was like, "Would you like to?" And I did it.

**Williams:** There was no open advertisement and you went and approached him?

**Kenny:** No, no, no. In some things there were but for this particular instance there was not because the languages were unique to that particular area and, first of all, they were poorly documented and all that and it was work. But I wanted to learn because I wanted to know what they said.

**Williams:** He saw something in you and he said "Would you like to?"

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** How long did you take this intensive language course? How long was the first one.

**Kenny:** It was a year.

**Williams:** OK. And how many days a week?

**Kenny:** It was three days a week for one year.

**Williams:** And you did it after work? So you worked your full-day?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** And [redacted]

**Williams:** Who was [redacted]

**Kenny:** This was in my early days. [redacted] was a linguist, I don't know what all [redacted] was but [redacted] was like a... [redacted] and Norman Wild were two of a kind and they were, well not two of a kind because [redacted] also had Crypt, but [redacted] encouraged me in all those esoteric languages [redacted] would help me

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find the things I needed and explain things to me, you know.

**Williams:** [redacted] was a co-worker? [redacted] was a peer or a supervisor?

**Kenny:** No [redacted] was a... [redacted] was like P1 used to be, you know [redacted] was in a group of...

**Williams:** Expert linguists?

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**Kenny:** Experts up there.

**Williams:** What was the first language that you studied, this three days a week for a year, was that [redacted]...

**Kenny:** No [redacted] was the first language I studied (but) the one I did three days a week at night was [redacted].

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** But the reason I studied [redacted] was because... My whole entree into languages at that time, and all that, was Mr. Hall.

**Williams:** OK. How did you feel about coming out to... Now you stayed in this group probably until we came out here, did you? Till the Agency moved out here?

**Kenny:** No. You know, we went through several reorganizations.

**Williams:** Oh God, I can't keep up with the organizations. Oh it's terrible.

**Kenny:** We reorganized and most of the group that I was originally with went into "G" Group.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** And the part that I stayed with went into "B" Group.

**Williams:** Right. OK.

**Kenny:** And it was very interesting because those of us who were assigned to "B" were not happy nor were the ones who were assigned to "G" but it just so happens that... It was funny because even though we had already had connections with Mr. Raven and so they didn't... It carried over regardless of whether we were in "B" or "G" or wherever. Wait a minute. Let me tell you who else was... Mr. Raven.

**Williams:** Frank Raven.

**Kenny:** Everybody can say what they want. They can knock him, they can call him a non-person or whatever. The thing I remember about Mr. Raven from my very early days was him sitting me down with a pencil and paper and telling me to try some things.

**Williams:** And where was he at this time?

**Kenny:** He was like a floating... I don't know what he was.

**Williams:** Technical director I think.

**Kenny:** Technical director or something or other. You know, he wandered in and

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out with his coke bottle in his hand and rallied the troops and raised hell and would do whatever but...

**Williams:** He sat you down...

**Kenny:** Sat me down and he'd heard that I had done some things and he sat me down, had me work with him for a while. He and Polly (B% Budenbach) and Helen Eagleson... I don't know if you have had a chance to talk to... Helen may not be alive now but you might try to find here.

**Williams:** Helen... How do you spell that?

**Kenny:** Eagleson, I think it's E-A-G-L-E-S-T-O-N, I'm not sure. (TR Note: Correct spelling is EAGLESON per Phoenix Society listing).

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** But she was black woman and she was very good. She was a very good Cryppie. And those three worked the, when I first came in, they were working the [redacted] all those problems that were nutty and we were not getting in and they worked together almost like a team. And I worked with them for a while. I learned a lot from them. There was a [redacted] [redacted] and I can't think of [redacted] last name [redacted] moved to (1G) and [redacted] But [redacted] left because [redacted] didn't have a degree and didn't see how... Whatever. But [redacted] had these other connections so [redacted] left.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

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**Kenny:** But [redacted] was also... Oh I can't think of [redacted] last name. I can see [redacted] face now.

**Williams:** It may occur to you.

**Kenny:** But at any rate, they taught me. I learned Crypt Analysis at their (1G), really.

**Williams:** Minnie, how did you feel about the move out to Fort Meade?

**Kenny:** The move to fort Meade... First of all, I was disappointed because when we went to the Meade Mobile at Arlington Hall, we were expecting that the Agency would wind up in a building like CIA's, that was the first thing. And we didn't want to come to Arlington Hall. We didn't want to move. We wanted to stay where we... I mean some...

**Williams:** You didn't want to come to Fort Meade.

**Kenny:** We didn't want to come to Fort Meade. The main reason (was) because it was segregated out here. We went up and down the roads trying to find some place to stay and you weren't going to be able to do that. The housing wasn't available. Not only that but see I was working, at that time, I was with Catholic Inter-racial Council...

**Williams:** With the what?

**Kenny:** Catholic Inter-racial Council and we were doing marches along with "Action" up and down (U.S.) 40 and all that so we knew...

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**Williams:** The environment.

**Kenny:** The environment. But at any rate, they just came out here. We were disappointed when we got here. I think even the people in that "Vanguard" group were terribly upset because, first of all, they couldn't go... They weren't... People didn't, you know, there was no place for them to go eat and right now they talk about doing things at Blob's Park, which I will not spend a nickel at, because Blob's Park was not open, they didn't want you there, they didn't want black soldiers there, they didn't want black civilians there.

**Williams:** And Hinckle's.

**Kenny:** And Hinckle's.

**Williams:** I've never been in Hinckle's.

**Kenny:** I've never been in Hinckle's either. I won't even eat the Ham Sandwich that everybody brings back.

**Williams:** Uh-uh, uh-uh.

**Kenny:** But I can remember coming out here while we were still at Arlington Hall waiting for our move, looking for housing, catering, all those places. We did not want to.

**Williams:** Did you come out as a group or individually?

**Kenny:** Individually.

**Williams:** You yourself came out.

**Kenny:** Individually.

**Williams:** You would have moved had there been something available?

**Kenny:** Right. And you see, at that time, many of our white co-workers did not have, you know, they were ex-military. They did not have degrees.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** But they could move out here, they could go to work, come home and go to college and get their degrees.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** The Blacks had this long commute. By the time they got home, they were tired.

**Williams:** That's right.

**Dickerson:** Exactly.

**Kenny:** You see, there was this (TR Note: Speaker stutters and stops speaking).

**Williams:** And it's intangible but I understand exactly what you're saying. It puts a burden...

**Kenny:** It was a burden... Well, they wanted to move to Fort Knox and I'm not sure that would have been better. That was one of the big things; move to Fort Knox.

**Williams:** And I just read in the archives, it was a meeting of the operational heads, and this was in 1951, I'm digging into the archives, and Personnel was reporting that the Negroes had expressed some concern about moving to Fort Knox because of the integration problem.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** But it was no better here.

**Kenny:** It may have been worse. See, I think they felt that... Well, I think money was a part of it because it was on a military base and they had this space but I kind of feel that the real social problems were not really investigated or thoroughly addressed.

**Williams:** Uh-huh. One of the things that we've heard, and you've kind of touched on it, was that the culture changed because there was a lot of local hiring and, you talked about the military, the military convertees, many of whom didn't have college and...

**Kenny:** Degrees... You had all the... You're talking about the Glen Burnie...

**Williams:** Glen Burnie High School. And so you noted and could (1-2B by next speaker).

**Kenny:** Yes, there was that. We had what we called, and in fact, there are still some that, I have said it, before I left, you have quite a few people with the "Glen Burnie Conflicts", we used to call them. They came in, they got the jobs, they moved up, they had this, you know, they were "Red Necks". Pure and simple. And you had to fight that, you know. It was bad enough... Most of the people, I'll say this, when I came in, well, there was prejudice, it's true, but you also had people with a different back ground. Most of the people in NSA, the whites, when I came, came from a different back ground than what came in with the "Glen Burnie Conflicts".

**Williams:** Exactly.

**Kenny:** They were more intelligent... What we used to do at lunch... you want to know what we did at lunch at Arlington Hall? We did charades in Greek. Can you imagine doing charades in Greek?

**Williams:** For fun.

**Kenny:** For fun.

**Williams:** Yes.

**Kenny:** For fun.

**Williams:** The intellectual stimulation was there and...

**Kenny:** Yes. And all those kinds of things. You don't... You couldn't talk that. In fact, there were some who didn't understand, I wouldn't say the higher levels of language but you had to be careful how you talked to some of them because they didn't understand English as it should be spoken.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.



**Kenny:** And so you would have to kind of translate down. It was a “strong old boys network” so you’d find that one would get in and he would pull his buddies in behind him.

**Williams:** And you heard this?

**Kenny:** Very much so. Wether he was qualified of not, he would come in behind him.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And so you had a kind of undermining the intellectual level going on as well as some undermining of the social advances that had been made.

**Williams:** Uh-huh. Well!

**Kenny:** I shouldn’t be so blunt but you asked me, I’m telling you. It was definitely there and I think it’s, as far as I know, when I left, I left in ‘93, there were still vestiges there, some pockets of it very strong.

**Williams:** And Minnie, people need to know that there are people here today that benefitted from that system.

**Kenny:** I’m going to tell you something. One of the things I did, I started it when I was in DDO, I had a... You asked me about people that I really enjoyed, I enjoyed working for Mr. Lutwiniack.

**Williams:** Who?

**Kenny:** Lutwiniack.

**Williams:** Oh yes, uh-huh.

**Kenny:** I really enjoyed working for him because... He invited me to come work for him. At the time, I was a Deputy Division Chief, I was a 15. The Division Chief was a 15, the Chief of Staff was a 15 and the Office Chief was a 15, so you know what was happening to me, I was buried. And I’ll never forget, he came and asked me if I would come to work for him. I mean, he came to my desk, and that blew me away.

**Williams:** Absolutely.

**Kenny:** So I said (that) I’d need to come talk to him. So I went to talk to Mr. Lutwiniack and I told him, I said, “Mr. Lutwiniack, P1, to me, is the “ivory tower” of NSA.” I said, “That’s where the brains live.” I said, “I don’t have any business in P1” and he said “Why?” I said, “Because I don’t have a degree and I’m going to be dealing with all these PHD’s and all.” He said “I don’t have one either.”

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** “OK. If it’s good enough for you, it’s good enough for me.” And I went and he made me the Division Chief there. It was very, you know, the thing that I found was that, I didn’t have any problem about credentials.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** That didn’t bother me, or the work. None of it bothered me. What I did find

though was that he would back me. And because he backed me, he backed me, Mr. Drake backed me, I didn't have no problems. I upset quite a few apple carts but I also was able to help a lot of people to get back to where we were. One of the things I started was helping people get their degrees. It wasn't a big thing. I didn't raise cane. I didn't broadcast it and all that but I found ways for people to continue working and get degrees. That's how I got involved with UMBC and all these different colleges. And Mr. Drake was good because I had convinced him that it was better for them to do it their way than for us to legislate how they did it. In other words, they have to fit into the NSA scholarship program. If a person went out and found their own way of doing it, their own scholarships or (1G) or whatever, it would be better because then they would work harder at it and all we needed to do was to give them time off to do it. And many of the people in DDO did that. Many people did that but what I'm going to tell you, so did some of the Chiefs. I will tell you that [redacted], for one, and several of the people at the other schools helped several of our seniors get their credentials after they became seniors. I mean high up in the hierarchy. And that's why I find, me personally, I find it hypocritical that we hold such achievements... We will penalize a person who hasn't had it. Some of these same people will hold them up as if they were, you know, that's the right of passage but they didn't have it when they passed.

**Williams:** They didn't have theirs, that's right.

**Kenny:** And that's the part that I find is hypocritical. I'm not against people with college degrees but the work we do here, the work that's done at NSA, is not something you learn in college. It may give you the tools, the skills, develop some of the skills that you apply, but basically, I've seen people who have been able to do more than Yeoman's work, I mean really do a "bang up job" because of their own natural intelligence and yet because they don't have a little piece of paper, never mind they're making a great contribution, they can't get the reward and that, I think, is something.

**Williams:** Minnie, would you comment; one of the things that we've heard, primarily in the Computer Science area, but I think it's applicable to languages as well, is that we weren't hiring a number of people of color because they didn't have degrees in Engineering or Computer Science or whatever. We couldn't hire people of color because they didn't have degrees... (XM/Tape stops here). OK. Yet we were told that other people would come in without degrees or didn't major in a language and we provided the training. Did you find that to be true in the language area as well? That there were whites who would come in as music majors and yet we weren't hiring blacks?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. Still do! I'm sorry. I might as well put it where I think it is.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Right now... Well let me go back to then. When we first started the intern program, it was very important that, you know, there was certain criteria

used and all that and I was in, because of Mr. Raven, I was one of the interviewers for the Crypt Analysis program, not Language Crypt Analysis now, and we interviewed many a young black who had the background but never made it through the door. Later on, they started opening up because you had all those presidential edicts that *you will* and, not only that but you had people looking at, on the committees, looking at us a little critically, so they started opening up. And, actually, I will tell you, I will give Walt Deely his due; I had a crew. It was Walt Deely, myself and two or three others, but especially Walt Deely. We would collect up... I remember [redacted] too, used to be in Personnel. [redacted] would collect up the applications [redacted] bring them over to my office. After work, Walt Deely and I would sit down and go through them. And these are for the young blacks who were rejected. We would pick out the ones that we thought had enough in their backgrounds to make it at NSA and then we would go around and "sell" them to Operations and whatever. We did that many, many days.

- Williams:** So you were on the committee interviewing the people?
- Kenny:** No. Oh, oh. Only in the beginning with the intern program.
- Kenny:** Oh, OK.
- Kenny:** But this is after the intern program.
- Williams:** OK.
- Kenny:** This is way after the intern program started.
- Williams:** Uh-huh.
- Kenny:** We would... They would just summarily... You know, they didn't want to... See, it's almost as if some of the schools were "black listed". I will tell you that. I wasn't until a major effort was made that we started even our coop programs in black colleges.
- Williams:** Uh-huh.
- Kenny:** You know, we did not bring them in and then once, I brought in a few through this method of running around, then the... That's why I say "My children" because the word got out, "Take the application in to Mrs. Kenny. She'll find a way to him in" or something like that.
- Williams:** Right.
- Kenny:** And it got to be not just the... It's not just the blacks, it's a lot of, you know, any minority. You see, the thing about it is, at least for a long period, the Personnel organization was under the rule and thumb, I put it that way, but was populated with an awful lot of that Glen Burnie (1G), an awful lot of it. You could see it everywhere. You could see it in who was turned down, who was brought onboard, who was in the high school work study program, who wasn't, you know, all those kinds of things. There was not the kind of conscious that should have been working.
- Dickerson:** In a human resources program.

**Kenny:** Right.

**Williams:** Exactly. Minnie, who were some of the blacks that helped you in this stage of your career in opening up opportunities, would you say?

**Kenny:** To tell you the truth, there weren't too many.

**Williams:** But there were people who could've been focal because, I mean, you had Jim Pryde coming along and...

**Kenny:** Well, Jim Pryde, yeah... Rudy Thompson.

**Williams:** Rudy Thompson you say was helpful to you?

**Kenny:** Rudy Thompson was helpful. Carroll Robinson was helpful.

**Williams:** Carroll Robinson.

**Kenny:** In fact, to tell you the truth, we used to get together in strange places. Carroll and I served on boards early on and sometimes we had to figure out how we could work it so that we supported each other but not supported each other. Sometimes, you know, if they see two of you, they figure they'll "Ice you out."

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** So, we'd have to make sure that we knew who was going to work with him and who worked with me and then how we could make that work to our advantage.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Rudy was good in another way in that Rudy knew the technical house. I mean Carroll knew it too but Rudy knew more of those people. Everybody saw Rudy as (1-2G), well met but he was shrewd. He knew which buttons to push in different places and he was very good, he was very good. He was not blatant.

**Williams:** He was in visible.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. You wouldn't see him, his hand, you know? Jim Pryde and I... I don't know... I'll tell you the truth. Jim Pryde, if you want my honest opinion, I think he helped but I never allowed him to get but so close to me. There was something there. Our chemistry wasn't quite... And he never could understand that but it was something about him that...

**Williams:** It didn't click.

**Kenny:** It didn't click, you know?

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**Williams:** Yeah, it happens.

**Kenny:** There was one [redacted] I think [redacted] name is [redacted] I can't remember [redacted] first name [redacted] used to be in [redacted] left the Agency. I don't know where [redacted] went but [redacted] I believe. Black [redacted] was helpful.

**Williams:** Minnie, weren't you in B12 when I came in as an intern?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

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**Williams:** I thought so.

**Kenny:** Yep. B12, B1203.

**Williams:** Uh-huh, OK. Let's see. Did we cover most of it?

**Dickerson:** Training.

**Williams:** Sam Hall came to you and asked you about taking this course. Did you find, you know you were kind of on your way now, did you find it difficult to get training in your early years?

**Kenny:** Yes. In fact, I had one supervisor tell me that... Of course you know, now I'm a Cryptie right? And I wanted to take some crypt courses and I was told that the worst thing that I could do would be to take a course because it would interfere, if I got into this academic thing, it would interfere with my natural abilities and so she couldn't let me go because she wanted me to do without it.

**Williams:** She was "protecting" you.

**Kenny:** Yes. She wanted me to continue doing what I was doing. But you know, training, that's not the only thing. When we opened up overseas language training, I can remember working my butt off to try to get that thing up off the ground and basically, it was going to [redacted] [redacted] or someplace else, anyhow, to learn these strange languages that we had to work with. Now the reason, they said, was because someone else was better suited for it but the thing that I've always wondered, I found very interesting, they sent any minority. In those early days, minorities just did not go. And I will tell you this, as late as when I was the EEO Director, DEEO...

**Williams:** Yeah, and that was '90, '91.

**Kenny:** No all the way up to '93. I find that... I had a case that was almost identical and it was very interesting because when I went to the Chief and talked to them about it they were very hostile and all that and they couldn't understand where I was coming from and told me that we were friends and they never expected me to do, to bring this up as an issue for them and all but it was the same identical thing. There was no reason. The person was better qualified. They told the person, true it was white but it was the same issue. The person was qualified and had applied and was turned down. The best person qualified person turned down. But he could teach someone else but he couldn't go to school. OK, so the next year, he took a leave of absence and spent his own money and went. So then he applied the following year to see if he could go. Turned down again - Not Qualified. Something's wrong. You can't tell me there's nothing wrong. There is a bias there and part of it was age.

**Williams:** Yes.

**Kenny:** The person was too old. Now see, that's wrong.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Because if a person is willing, they can learn anything, I don't care what age they are. If they've really got their mind to it and that's what is driving them, they'll do it. They might not do it the way you do it or I do it but they'll do it. And we do have those same biases, we still have some biases here that really will floor you. I know that in overseas assignments there's bias. There's still this thing about whether blacks can be going to places. They don't tell you that.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** At least, I guess they don't tell you that anymore.

**Williams:** Well, we've heard of...

**Kenny:** But I know of a black being told that.

**Williams:** That we don't send you to these places?

**Kenny:** Yes.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And that's against the United States law. I mean, it's not like it's a "nice to do thing" or a "not nice to do thing", that's the law.

**Williams:** Minnie, do you know anything... When you came in, it was in the height of the Cold War, the height of the fear against communism, the McCarthy hearings were going on. Security had a job to do, had a mission but sometimes, we've been told that it appeared that Security was overzealous in prosecuting their mission when blacks were concerned. Do you have any sense of that?

**Kenny:** I feel that they are. I can remember from my own instance. I was working with the Catholic Inter-racial Counsel and we were invited to a reception at the French Embassy, actually it was a fashion show, and I came in with the invitation, Because you know, anytime with a foreigner you're supposed to report it.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** I came in with the invitation and I took it to M5, I explained the situation, the whole, you know, it wasn't to me personally, it was to the officers in the organization and it was a fashion show. They didn't want me to go. Wanted to know who I knew, you know, all these kind of foolish questions and then finally, I guess about a week or so later, they called me down and told me they'd "meant to tell me that it would have been all right." I never carried them another invitation. Never. I never did. I said, "You taught me a lesson. I don't have to put up with that." Now, I feel that, and I feel this strongly, when you come to work at NSA, you give up an awful lot. You give up an awful lot of your natural personal inclinations in order to stay within the confines of what is required to keep your job but I so believe that in many instances, color has been one of the confines that has been illegally used. And I don't mean just black color, I mean any minority. I think the minorities have been discriminated terribly much here

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(SIC).

**Williams:** And continue to be.

**Kenny:** Yes. I can remember going to... I'm going to tell you this, I went to Dick Lord when he was Deputy Director and I spoke to him about [redacted] [redacted] I don't know if you remember [redacted]

**Williams:** I remember [redacted]

**Kenny:** [redacted] was the longest tenured GS-13 in the whole, not only in the Agency, but I believe in the whole community. There was no excuse for that. None. [redacted] had [redacted] faults but [redacted] turned out decent work when [redacted] worked. Doctor Iredell will tell you that.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** But I told him, "It doesn't make sense." [redacted] was the longest tenured... and we only, it was only after sitting around the table one day and I said, "You know, it's awfully interesting, we got an awful lot of Hispanics but no Hispanics super-grade. We got one. But you stop and look at, just look across the population. You'll see."

**Williams:** I know it, I know, Minnie.

**Dickerson:** What ever became of [redacted]?

**Kenny:** [redacted] retired.

**Williams:** Do you know... We've talked about the environment around Fort Meade, the conditions, the accommodations were segregated. Do you know of any effort within the Agency to desegregate those accommodations?

**Kenny:** No. I don't know of any. If there were, they were hidden.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I don't know anything about them.

**Williams:** OK. Because we had heard that it was NSA employees who went to some of these eating establishments and when they were refused service, black employees, when they were refused service, turned the names of the establishments into Personnel who turned it over to Fort Meade authorities and they were declared "Off Limits".

**Kenny:** Well I know that Fort Meade authorities declared places "Off Limits" but I do know that soldiers were discriminated against. It wasn't just NSA.

**Williams:** Oh Yeah, black soldiers.

**Kenny:** The black soldiers were discriminated against at Blob's Park and other places and some of these had just come back from combat.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And they were, the places were declared "Off Limits" but I don't know (XB by next speaker).

**Williams:** If we played a part in it.

**Kenny:** What part we played in it.

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**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I know that the thing that I found interesting was that when other agencies had moved, they usually, at least even when we were talking about moving to Fort Knox, at the Meade Mobile they had something that told you about the situation for housing. I don't remember anything that encouraged us in any way about houses.

**Williams:** Well, I was going to ask you that because I went over to the newsletter office and I was going through the newsletter and that's the first time I came across this "Meade Mobile" which was established to provide this advanced information about the Fort Meade environment. And I'm saying, "This is 1953!" Or '54, whatever, and we were segregated. What about housing for blacks?

**Kenny:** In 1953 and '54, "Action Under Julius Hopson" was marching up and down this road. I can tell you that. People were getting their arms broken, their heads knocked in and everything. So it wasn't that it was unknown.

**Williams:** But there was nothing in the newsletter to reflect any sensitivity to these conditions.

**Kenny:** No.

**Williams:** I had something else I wanted to ask you and I forget what it was. Yolonde, did you have something? Maybe I'll think of it.

**Dickerson:** Yes. I've noticed, and maybe Jeannette has too, when talking to the black male, especially the ones who had worked here early on, they seem to have had a very difficult time in the work area, and two to the point that it nearly brought tears to my eyes to listen to their interview. Did you find that to be prevalent?

**Kenny:** There were some that were... OK. The majority of black males did not have the same opportunities that black females had. I'll put it that way. They were not accepted as readily as... You know, they were not given positions commensurate with their abilities as readily as black females were. I'll tell you that. There were some who stood out.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Mr. Raven... I can remember [redacted] was recognized for having certain abilities, but the average did not. In fact, early on, I believe, most of those who had...

**Williams:** Can I get you some more coffee?

**Kenny:** I think I've got a little here.

**Williams:** We should have water at these interviews.

**Dickerson:** Yes.

**Kenny:** I think most of those who had ability and were a bit more militant left.

**Williams:** Isn't that interesting?



**Kenny:** I really do believe that. A lot of those, I know, left because they weren't going to take what they were given.

**Williams:** Do you think NSA, in terms of race relations and the progress of blacks, where does it stand in the Federal Government?

**Kenny:** It's above a lot of them.

**Williams:** Still? Now?

**Kenny:** Even now.

**Williams:** And even then, you think it was?

**Kenny:** I don't know. I think it may have been. I don't know. Maybe a little above but... I have looked at other agencies, even at DIA. The thing that has saved NSA is that we don't hire dummies. I will tell you that. I mean as far as hiring through your technical, you know, there were no real dummies at NSA. Even if they don't have degrees, that don't mean they're dummies.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** And people find their way. We don't have the strictures that other agencies have, you know in most of the other agencies. In fact, I was talking to a man Sunday and it rather shocked me. He is working as an accountant and his job stops at a 12, at the top of that job, but to get to a 12, you have to be like a Branch Chief or Division Chief.

**Williams:** That's today?

**Kenny:** That's today.

**Williams:** That's unbelievable.

**Kenny:** And he's working in downtown Washington in one of the (B% old line) agencies. And I'm sitting there listening to him, and I think he is an 11. He's waiting for someone to die, or whatever, for him to get promoted.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** Now you stop and think. He's been there, he's not a young man but you look at him and you think about all of this investment, experience and know-how and, but he is co-optive I guess because he is not looking for anyplace else to go.

**Williams:** Minnie, were you ever told that you couldn't go someplace unless you found a replacement for yourself?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** You were?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. It didn't stop me though. I was also told, now this is something most people don't know but, I've been... You know, it's funny what people tell you. That's the one thing I learned about NSA, people tell you all kinds of things. They'll tell you that but if the other person wants you bad enough...

**Williams:** Let me get you some water.

**Dickerson:** I'll get it Jeannette.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** We'll wait for you to come back.

**Dickerson:** Oh no. Go ahead.

**Kenny:** OK. Wait a minute. You know what I have? (TR Note: Recording stopped here for unknown period).

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** I think NSA is better than most agencies. And it's not because of the social atmosphere anymore, it's because of the ability to move around where in other agencies you're kind of locked in.

**Williams:** Right. There is that.

**Kenny:** I think in its earlier ages, the social, that it was much better.

**Williams:** Social, you mean social amongst blacks or social...

**Kenny:** I mean it's general...

**Williams:** Oh, she's locked out.

**Kenny:** I mean the general caring and feeding of its people.

**Williams:** It was better earlier?

**Kenny:** Yes. I think it was much better earlier. Thank You (for the water).

**Williams:** Talk about that a little bit.

**Kenny:** I think once we... When we were coming up, we had, at least when I was coming up in the Agency, we had Doctor Tordella. Doctor Tordella was a very morale, very intelligent disciplinarian. He set rules and he held you to them. And while we did have other problems like the business of discrimination and all that, but you had a moral tone within the agency that contained an awful lot of other things and so you didn't have some of the rampant stuff you see going on. Not only that but you know, I went to Doctor Tordella once and I shocked him; he was Deputy Director, I was working in "B" group and, in fact, I was working in B12. And I called him and got on his calendar and I went up to see him and he asked me, he couldn't imagine what I wanted to see him about and told him that I wanted to talk to him about discrimination. He turned almost chalk white but we had a long conversation, we really did. And I could talk to him and he listened. I mean, it wasn't like, "Oh boy! What is this all about?" I mean, he really listened. He asked questions and I just told him. That was because of his own moral fiber. I'm not sure that you would get the same kind of reaction from a Deputy Director now. You might have gotten it from Bob Prestel but I'm not sure about any of the others.

**Williams:** Minnie, we also had the advantage then, and I saw it when I came in in '64, which was somewhat after you, but we were so much smaller and there was an advantage to that. Right now, we're so large and we're

spread over I don't know how many campuses, it's gotten very... What I sense from you is there was a personal aspect to working at the Agency. It is very impersonal now.

**Kenny:** There is a reason for that and I've said this and I'll say it again, we've had too much movement at the top. You remember how long Doctor Tordella was in place?

**Williams:** Oh yes. Forever.

**Kenny:** He was the continuity. Everybody said it was bad. It was good because people identified with this moral person.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Whatever else you had, the Director came, the Director set his standards and his programs but Doctor Tordella was the moral standard of the Agency. And I mean he was that. I can tell you, I mean, if you know Doctor Tordella and you lived through those times, you know he did some things that shocked many people. He called people in and called their wives and would make them tell them things that they were doing so that they would not be subject to blackmail and things like that.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** I mean, he was the moral standard for the... We don't have that. Every time you get a new Director, and sometimes even within his short period of term, you got a new somebody up there as Deputy.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And you don't have any continuity because there's always "musical chairs" going on.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And not only that but the Directors and the Deputy Directors had a broader span. They touched more people. Now you talk about the Agency being so big but they only talk to these (B% bod). What is it 5 or 6 people?

**Williams:** Uh-huh. A very small number.

**Kenny:** He only hears what they want him to hear. They control his access. He doesn't ever get a chance to talk to anybody.

**Williams:** There's no way you would have gotten on the Deputy Directors calendar now.

**Kenny:** No. No.

**Williams:** As a, what were you in B12? Deputy Branch Chief or Branch Staff?

**Kenny:** In B12 I was staff level then. Never would I have gotten on the Director's calendar then.

**Williams:** No.

**Kenny:** See, the problem is, and I said this when they did it, when they reduced

the access to the Director to just the members of the BOD, I said, "The poor man's co-opted. And he is co-opted because the one thing that you do at NSA, and I've seen them do it more than one time, they wait him out.

**Williams:** Oh! They still do!

**Kenny:** I know it. They wait him out. He'll say... He'll come in and say "I'm going to do this and that" and they'll postpone it and study it and massage it and the next thing you know it's time for him to leave and it's never been enforced.

**Williams:** Yes. That's so true. Minnie, what are some of the things that I should have asked that I didn't ask?

**Kenny:** I don't know.

**Williams:** If going to tell the story... I didn't ask about the... I'll get back to that. Yolonde has a couple of questions.

**Kenny:** OK.

**Dickerson:** We were told early on that the blacks were instrumental in starting the Credit Union at Arlington Hall.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. I think they were. I believe that.

**Dickerson:** Because there's nothing, Jeannette uncovered a newsletter, it's not the documented (XB by next speaker).

**Kenny:** Of course not. I think, and not only that, but when you get right down to it, I think not only the Credit Union, I think most of the social things you would find had some start with the blacks. I will tell you, down in, I call it "Down in the Hole", that's what we used to call it, it was a society down there and I don't mean it in the negative sense of the word, I mean this was a society of people who interacted and whatever. In the early days we had joyous things happening. You had jazz concerts, you had art shows and I mean real art shows, not like we have now, but I mean, you know, you had a Miss NSA, you had all these things but most of that came out of what was going on in this society.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** The Credit Union, things like that came out of this society.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** That's something that we need to follow up on because that is certainly a contribution.

**Dickerson:** Definitely so. It is.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** And talking about the social events, there was an NSA Dance, NSA Boat Ride, those kinds of things. Do you know if blacks participated in those? I mean the official sanctioned things.

**Kenny:** I don't know about... I thought some did, I guess. I always assumed

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somebody did. I know I didn't.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** Not until we had a General, what was his name, that had the dances over here at the Officer' Club? I should remember his name.

**Williams:**

**Kenny:** No. I don't remember. Much later.

**Williams:** I don't know who... Carter?

**Kenny:** No. It's more recent than that. Much more recent.

**Williams:** One of our Generals?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. See, I told you I have "senior moments". Air Force General. Went to Central High School in Philadelphia.

**Williams:** Oh well, whatever.

**Kenny:** Any how. That's when I started going. I didn't go before. I didn't go to a lot of things because of the locale.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** You know. You look at the locale and you say, Well, am I going to be comfortable?"

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** And then too I had a young daughter and I was busy running around chasing behind her.

**Williams:** Now, back to my question. What are some of the things that I should have asked that would help put definition, more definition, on this period?

**Kenny:** Some of them I wouldn't be able to give you answers to but if you get Fred Syphax and some of the others in and talk to them.

**Williams:** We've talked to Fred on the telephone.

**Dickerson:** Yeah, Fred told me he's coming n in May. He will call me once we get a little closer to the time.

**Kenny:** Talk to Fred. I've often wondered why Fred never got to be "Chief of"...

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** Or even Deputy Chief of "T". He was always there to "show-up" the Chief but he never got the chance to "run the show". Yet he was always visible, you know, he was always standing behind at the meetings or giving...

**Williams:** And very highly regarded technically.

**Kenny:** Highly regarded technically but they never, you know...

**Williams:** Where was... Why not?

**Kenny:** You know, why not? Mr. Raven made... There I go again... He did something interesting when he, do you remember when he had two Deputies?

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**Williams:** Yes, I remember that.

**Kenny:** You remember that?

**Williams:** I remember that.

**Kenny:** And then when [redacted] retired he put [redacted] up there.

**Williams:** Uh-huh.

**Kenny:** I often wonder why [redacted] didn't stay. Do you remember? [redacted] was there for a little bit and then [redacted] left.

**Williams:** I don't remember that.

**Dickerson:** I do.

**Kenny:** Yeah.

**Williams:** OK.

**Dickerson:** And I also recall that it was said that [redacted] wanted the next level.

**Kenny:** [redacted] should have been given the next level. [redacted] should have been the Chief. When Raven moved on [redacted] should have been the Chief [redacted] had the ability. But I would love to hear [redacted] start on that.

**Dickerson:** [redacted] coming in in May.

**Williams:** [redacted] is?

**Dickerson:** Yes [redacted] told me that [redacted] would call me when [redacted] gets here.

**Kenny:** And do talk to [redacted] Is [redacted] coming in?

**Williams:** [redacted] is coming in and [redacted] is coming in.

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**Dickerson:** Do you remember [redacted]

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. That's another one. [redacted] left.

**Williams:** [redacted] left a very unhappy person.

**Dickerson:** Yes. We've been trying to... Well, someone gave me [redacted] E-mail address and [redacted] post office box but no phone number. I sent [redacted] a letter...

**Williams:** Do you think [redacted] would be willing to talk to us? Because I think [redacted] was very bitter when [redacted] left.

**Dickerson:** [redacted] lived near [redacted] before. [redacted] told me they lived close.

**Kenny:** [redacted] should. I mean if you... I think [redacted] would even if you have to go down there and talk to [redacted] That would be a nice trip.

**Williams:** There's no money.

**Dickerson:** There's no money. We wanted to go see Iris Carr.

**Williams:** And Benson Buffham. Let me tell you this story, perhaps you know this. We did discover in the archives that there was a all black analytical organization that worked for SSA, Signal Security Agency, in 1945. The operational head of that, 'cause they didn't make us like the Chief, the operational head of that was Bill coffee. His, sort of, Deputy was Herman

Fine.

**Kenny:** Uh-huh.

**Williams:** You know about this?

**Kenny:** Uh-huh. Go ahead.

**Williams:** And the Chief was Benson Buffham, Captain Benson Buffham. So, we did contact Mr. Buffham and he remembers the mission and; the mission was to solve commercial codes and translate and publish. He remembered the mission, he remembered the people. We wanted to go down there and talk to him. There's no money. There's no money for TDY. And this would be a cheap TDY down to Florida. So we sent him a letter with the questions that we had. Tell us about Bill Coffee and Herman Fine. What do you know?

**Kenny:** What is the purpose of the foundation?

**Williams:** We're looking to...

**Dickerson:** In their supporting this.

**Williams:** Well, they support this, they support the effort but they're not putting any money toward it.

**Kenny:** Well why don't you ask them for money?

**Williams:** Well, we have to go through the chain and (B% Dave Hatch) and so forth but that may be an option.

**Kenny:** Well, I'll tell you what. Have you talked to Ralph Adams? Isn't he on the foundation?

**Dickerson:** Yes. He'd be a good person... .

**Williams:** I don't know if he's on the foundation.

**Dickerson:** Yes he is. He's the treasurer.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** That's what I thought. Talk to Ralph. You can call Ralph and say, "Hey Ralph, we've got a little problem", and let him come in through. You can do that, you know. There's different ways you "skin the cat".

**Williams:** OK. Herman Fine. Do you know anything about his career or his background?

**Kenny:** The only thing I know about Herman Fine is that he was the first supervisor, black supervisor, out of "the hole".

**Williams:** Out of "the hole".

**Kenny:** When they started integrating that group, Herman Fine came up as a supervisor.

**Williams:** OK.

**Kenny:** He came up in a management situation. He was the first black Office Chief in Operations. He was Chief of G5.

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** He was Deputy to [redacted], and I think he replace [redacted] when [redacted] retired.

**Williams:** Now I knew Herman Fine. He was Exec of the R&R intern panel, or F. R. Intern panel, whatever we were calling it. But I would love to know some of his background. How did he get into this business so early? Where was he recruited? And Bill Coffee.

**Kenny:** I bet you will find that they had... Someone knew him and brought him in.

**Williams:** I bet that's probably right.

**Kenny:** I'm thinking you will find that that happened, I know, during my tenure, early tenure, that several of the blacks who came upstairs were brought in by people.

**Williams:** Right. Yeah, you're probably right.

**Dickerson:** Such as Ray Weir.

**Williams:** Ray Weir, a perfect example as Yolonde said. Hazzard was his name. He was a Division Chief in the office of Security or maybe they were Security Division and he was a Branch, but anyway, he was a supervisor and he, the agency knew that they would be hiring a number of key punch operators and whatever in the early fifties and they thought that they should have a black polygraph examiner and this Captain Hazzard knew one Black. He was in the military with Ray Weir and contacted Ray Weir, who was teaching in D. C., and that's how Ray Weir came in.

**Kenny:** And it helped a lot that he did not necessarily look too black.

**Dickerson:** Uh-huh, uh-huh.

**Williams:** He did not, Yeah. In fact, when we talked to Ray Weir, Ray said that when he was finally allowed to polygraph whites, some of the whites would question, "What was he?". That was important to them. That they not be interegated.

**Kenny:** And if you noticed, that was the other thing that I noticed, particularly at the Agency. If you showed, if a black showed, five cents worth of intelligence and initiative, he was asked what he was or what he was mixed with. He couldn't just be a black man. He had to be...

**Williams:** Something else.

**Kenny:** A black Irishman or something, you know?

**Williams:** Right.

**Kenny:** You know. You just couldn't be black.

**Williams:** Uh-uh. Interesting. Well, I think I've exhausted my questions, Minnie.

**Kenny:** OK... General.

**Williams:** Faurer? Faurer! F-A-U-R-E-R.



**Kenny:** Yes.

**Williams:** Good, good. OK.

**Kenny:** I told you I had these “senior moments”.

**Dickerson:** We all have.

**Kenny:** But seriously, you asked me uh... The whites that helped me along the way and I mentioned the men, but I didn’t mention Mrs. Budenbach.

**Williams:** You did mention Polly Budenbach.

**Kenny:** Yes, but I didn’t mention that she was one of my mentors at that. I mentioned Mr. Raven, Mr. Lutwiniack...

**Williams:** Helen Eagleson.

**Kenny:** Helen Eagleson, but Mrs. Budenbach, she was the one who effected my promotion to 15. I found that out. She never told me. But she sat the board and she wanted to know why. She wanted to know why. And it’s very interesting, the thing that I find, and I’ve said this to many of the kids that I mentored, who are still here, who are now retired even, makes me an old lady doesn’t it? We can’t make it by ourselves here at this Agency but we can help each other and I only hope that the people who are still here are still remembering to reach down and help somebody.

**Williams:** I don’t see a lot of that. I don’t see a lot of that, Minnie. I really don’t.

**Kenny:** Well I had reason to question that because I was speaking to someone that I had mentored and I was driving home that point and they were getting a little uncomfortable and I wanted to know why. Because the thing about it... You never go through life alone and you never go through this Agency by yourself.

**Williams:** Uh-uh.

**Kenny:** you may get to so high but, you know, you fall too because you don’t own the job.

**Williams:** That’s right.

**Kenny:** And most people don’t realize that. They think when they get up there... There’s a chapter in Deuteronomy, chapter eight, that tells you that; you don’t do it by your power. It’s someone else’s power that got you up there and you better be thankful and remember that and help somebody else.

**Williams:** Right, right.

**Kenny:** But that’s the thing that I saw. I think NSA, to me, NSA was good. I enjoyed it because I was crazy enough to do what I wanted to do. I didn’t take no for an answer a lot of times. Sometimes you say, people ask you, you have to find your own replacement. That’s not my job.

**Williams:** Uh-uh.

**Kenny:** And the other thing that I would ask, real quick-like, “What’s in it for me?” I really would ask that. “What’s in it for me? I don’t mind doing this but

what's in it for me? What am I going to get out of it? I know what you're going to get out of it. You're going to look good. What's going to happen to me?" You know? The thing that I do know, you asked me about us blacks growing up here, I think that we have to learn how to be greedy but we also have to learn how to be effective. And you can be greedy and ineffective too, you know, but you need to know how to "maneuver the waters". And if you don't have someone there helping you "over the rapids", whether they're black or white, you're "up the creek". And you need to pass that knowledge on to someone coming behind you so that they can make it over the rapids too.

**Williams:** I really don't think that happens.

**Kenny:** Well I'm sorry, because I think it's a place that, in fact I'm going to be writing... I'm writing a letter right now, it's on my computer, to [redacted] because I feel that too much... Change is good. Change is good, always. That's one reason I left. Because I thought it was time for me to go but I think also that too much change is not good. It's disruptive.

**Williams:** It's (1G). Absolutely.

**Kenny:** Yes. And in this kind of business, you need to have a core group of knowledge. You need to have that "core knowledge" somewhere and you need to protect that and you just can't keep cutting away it because, pretty soon, you won't have anything.

**Williams:** Yep. Well, Minnie, it was really great talking to you.

**Kenny:** Well, if you think of anything else you want to ask me, I'm only a...

**Williams:** Well you know what we're about and if you think of anything that you care to share or names of people that you think we should talk to, we are going to talk to [redacted]

**Dick** [redacted] hopefully Fred Syphax and we have a number of other people.

**Kenny:** Yes, you have Iris and [redacted] and (1G).

**Williams:** Yes. We've got them on the calendar.

**Kenny:** And I don't know if you can find John.

**Williams:** John Taylor?

**Kenny:** John Taylor. John was brilliant but... He was brilliant.

**Williams:** Well we can try.

**Kenny:** And it could be, you know, sometimes... (XM/Cut ends here).

[End of Interview OH-1999-27-KENNY]